

K. Academy. etc.

A N

A P P E A L

TO THE

FELLOWS of the ROYAL SOCIETY,

CONCERNING THE

M E A S U R E S

TAKEN BY

SIR JOSEPH BANKS,

THEIR

P R E S I D E N T,

TO COMPEL

D R. H U T T O N

To resign the OFFICE of

SECRETARY TO THE SOCIETY

FOR THEIR

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

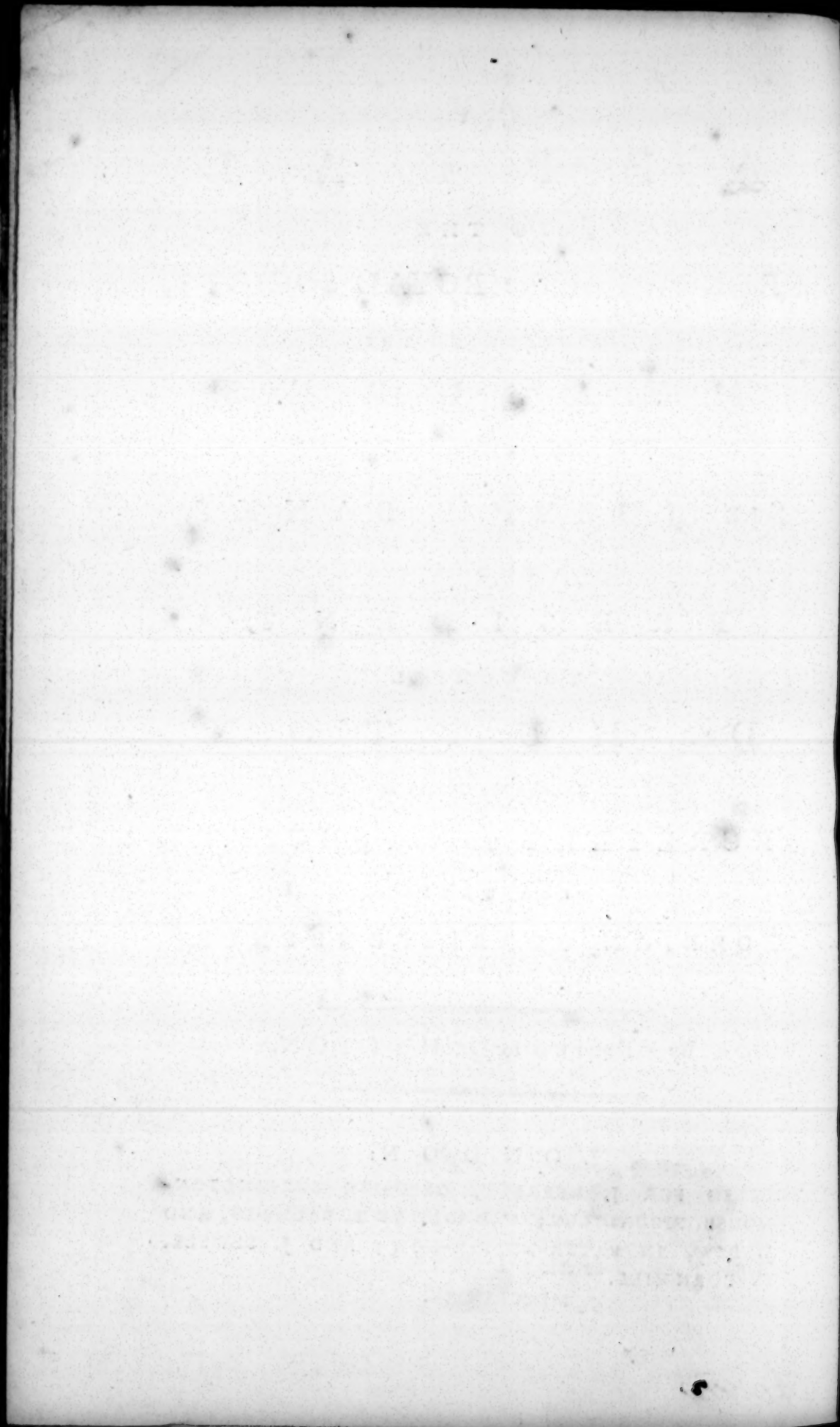
By a FRIEND to Dr. HUTTON.

L O N D O N:

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4979



A N

A P P E A L

TO THE

FELLOWS of the ROYAL SOCIETY.

THOUGH Dr. Hutton's resignation of the office of Secretary to the Royal Society for their foreign correspondence, and the methods taken by Sir Joseph Banks, the President, to put him under a necessity of resigning it, have been pretty fully debated in some of the late meetings of the Society, and many gentlemen, who were present at those meetings, seem sensible of the harshness at least, if not of the injustice, of the treatment he has met with, I am afraid that many other Members of the Society may not yet be sufficiently acquainted with all the circumstances of the business to form a just conception of its merits. I shall therefore, out of regard to Dr. Hutton, and in justice to his conduct in this office, (which I take to have been perfectly regular and unexceptionable,) endeavour to give so full and exact a relation of the whole affair, from the beginning to the end, that there shall no longer remain the least doubt, or obscurity, in the minds of any of my readers concerning *the facts* of the case: after which, I presume, there will be little room for a difference of opinion on *the merits* of it. And then I shall hope that the fruit of this conviction on the subject, in the minds of such of my readers as are Fellows of the Royal Society, (for whose perusal, principally, this paper is drawn up) will be a concurrence in some reasonable and prudent measure, that shall procure a restoration of Dr. Hutton to this office of Secretary for the foreign correspondence, of which he has been so causelessly and so capriciously deprived. By such a measure they would prove to the world, that in *their* minds the love of truth, when fully and clearly discovered, is superior to all other considerations; and that they are determined (as a Philosophical Society ought

to be) to maintain, in practice as well as in theory, the important old maxim, "that *magna est veritas et prævalebit.*"

Dr. Hutton is known to be one of the best Mathematicians in England: and he is likewise a very good writer upon the Mathematics, which is far from being the case with every person who understands them, or is well-read in them. He is also remarkably industrious, and has furnished the Philosophical Transactions with more papers (and those full of ingenuity and invention, as well as learning) upon mathematical subjects, than, I believe, any other Member of the Society. He is also Professor of the Mathematics at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich; where he, some years ago, tried a variety of most curious and useful experiments upon the force of fired gunpowder, and the initial velocity of small cannon-balls, similar to those which had formerly been tried upon the like subjects with respect to musket-balls, by the late very eminent Mathematician and Engineer, Mr. Benjamin Robins. And he afterwards drew up an account of these experiments upon cannon-balls, which was presented to the Royal Society, and printed in the Philosophical Transactions; and was thought by the late worthy and learned Sir John Pringle, the then President of the Royal Society, and his Council, to be the most meritorious paper that had that year been presented to the Society; and, as such, became the occasion of their rewarding its learned author, by giving him Sir Godfrey Copley's medal.

With this merit and reputation, it will not be thought surprising that Sir John Pringle, and many other very respectable Members of the Royal Society, when a vacancy happened in the office of one of the Secretaries of the Society, by the Reverend Dr. Horsley's resignation in November 1778, should have pitched upon Dr. Hutton as a fit person to succeed him. He accordingly, by their advice and encouragement, became a candidate for it; and a great number of Fellows of the Society voted for him. But he was not elected, there being a still greater number of votes for his competitor, the Reverend Mr. Maty, whose peculiar situation, and uncommon proof of a high degree of integrity and delicacy of conscience, justly intitled him to the notice and favour of all mankind.

Dr. Hutton's failure of success on this occasion was thought, even by those Members of the Society who had voted for Mr. Maty in preference to him, to be a reason for bestowing on him some other mark of the Society's favourable regard to him, in lieu of this office, which they had thought themselves obliged, from very powerful considerations, to bestow on his antagonist. And accordingly, when Mr. Maty, (who had, for some time before this election, held the office of Secretary to the Society for their foreign correspondence,) resigned the said office upon his being chosen one of the principal Secretaries, the President and Council

Council bestowed it on Dr. Hutton. This office is of but small value, the salary of it being only twenty pounds a year; and therefore, in point of profit, it was hardly worth Dr. Hutton's acceptance. But as it was a mark of the Society's good opinion and favour to him, he considered himself as honoured by the offer of it, and therefore accepted it with thankfulness and pleasure, and determined to perform the duties of it with diligence and punctuality.

This office of *foreign Secretary*, (as it is usually called,) was not created by the Charters of the Royal Society, but is founded on a legacy of 500*l.* which was given to the Royal Society by the last will of a Mr. *Robert Keck*, who died in the year 1727. The words of the bequest are as follows; "*I give unto the President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society for the increasing of Natural Knowledge, five hundred pounds, to be by them laid out, and the profits arising to be bestowed on some one of the Fellows whom they shall appoint to carry on a foreign correspondence.*"

The profits arising every year from this 500*l.* are 20*l.* and constitute the salary of this office.

From the words of the foregoing clause of Mr. Keck's will, it might reasonably be concluded, that the appointment of the person who was to carry on the Society's foreign correspondence, should belong to *the whole body* of the Royal Society, or the President, Council, and Fellows of it, and not to the President and Council only. For the word "*they*" in the expression "*whom they shall appoint,*" evidently relates to the persons mentioned in the first part of the clause, to whom the gift is made, which are *the President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society*. And such a manner of appointing this officer, would be analogous to the practice of the Society, in the appointment of the *two principal Secretaries*, as well as of the *President* of the Society, the *Treasurer* of it, the *Curators of Philosophical Experiments*, the *Clerk*, and the two inferior officers called *Serjeants at Mace*; all which are directed by the royal charters to be elected by the Society at large, as will appear from the following extract from the second Charter, which was granted in the fifteenth year of the reign of King Charles the Second, and bears date on the 22d of April, 1663. *Et ulterius volumus, ac, per præsentis, &c. concedimus præfatis Præsidi, Concilio, et Sodalibus, Regalis Societatis prædictæ, &c. Quòd ipsi et successores sin de cætero in perpetuum habeant, &c. unum Thesaurarium, duos Secretarios, Curatores experimentorum duos vel plures, Clericum unum vel plures, et præterea duos servientes ad clavas, qui de tempore in tempus super Præsidentem attendant; quòdque prædicti Thesaurarius, Secretarii, Curatores, Clericus, vel Clerici, et servientes ad clavas, per præsidem, concilium, et sodales, regalis Societatis prædictæ, sive per aliquos triginta et unum, vel plures, eorum (quorum præsidem pro tempore existen-*
tem,

tem, vel ejus deputatum, unum esse volumus, vel per majorem partem prædictorum triginta et unius, vel plurium, eligendi et nominandi, &c See the quarto book of charters and statutes of the Royal Society, published in the year 1776, page 31. Here we see, that the Treasurer, the two Secretaries, the two, or more, Curators of Experiments, the Clerk or Clerks, and the two Sergeants at Mace, are all to be chosen by the President, Council, and Fellows of the Society, *per Præsidentem, Concilium, & Sodales regalis Societatis prædictæ elegendi & nominandi*. And so, one would naturally suppose, according to the spirit and analogy of the foregoing directions of the Charter, as well as according to the words of Mr. Keck's will above recited, this officer ought likewise to be appointed. But the practice of the Society has been otherwise: They have not insisted on a right of electing the Foreign Secretary themselves, but have permitted their Presidents and Councils to appoint him whenever there has been a vacancy; which, I presume, is chiefly to be attributed to the great confidence which the Society has almost constantly placed in the wisdom and justice of their President and Council till within these few years past, that they have fallen under the government of Sir Joseph Banks.

The proper business of this office, according to the words of Mr. Keck's will, is to carry on the foreign Correspondence of the Society; that is, to write letters to learned foreigners in the name, and by the direction, of either the President and Council, or the President, Council, and Fellows of the Society; which might be sometimes a very light and easy task, and sometimes a very laborious one, according to the state of the Society's foreign correspondence, and the manner of carrying it on. In the present state of that correspondence this business is extremely easy, for a reason that will presently be mentioned; and from the first institution of this office by Mr. Keck's will, I believe it has been far from burthenome, though, perhaps, it has sometimes been rather less easy than it is at present. But, though the original and proper duty of this office, according to the words of Mr. Keck's will, was an easy one, it has since been loaded with another duty, which could not be well discharged without a great deal of labour and ability. For the Presidents and Councils, who have from time to time appointed the Foreign Secretaries, have required them to translate into English all the papers presented to the Society that were written in any foreign language, those written in Latin not excepted. And the translations made from any of the modern languages have generally been printed in the Philosophical Transactions, in the same volumes in which the original papers themselves have been published; and those made from the Latin papers have been kept in the archives of the Society, for the use and inspection of such of the Fellows as may wish

wish to have recourse to them. This duty, it will easily be conceived, is a very laborious one, and deserves, when ably discharged, a better reward than 20l. a year.

Dr. Hutton was unanimously appointed to this office of *Foreign Secretary* by Sir Joseph Banks, the President, and the Council of the Royal Society, at a meeting of the Council held on the 14th of January, 1779. And at this time both the above-mentioned duties were, in point of form, annexed to the office, though, *in fact*, only the latter duty was expected to be performed in it. For he was furnished, by order of the Council, with a paper of instructions concerning the duties of the office, which was in the words following; to wit, that he was

1st, To return thanks for presents.

2dly, To answer and write letters from and to foreigners.

3dly, To enter in a book a list of all such letters and copies, when directed.

4thly, To translate into English the papers sent to the Society.

And 5thly, To give a short account of foreign books presented to the Society.

The three former of these articles relate to the original duty of the office, as created by Mr. Keck's will: the two last are additional duties annexed to the office by the authority of the President and Council, and are heavy ones.

The Members of the Council, at the time they appointed Dr. Hutton to this office, and ordered the foregoing paper concerning the duties of it to be given him, all agreed that the salary of 20l. a year was much too small a reward for the services required to be performed in it, and expressed a wish and a general intention of making some addition to it; but came to no immediate and specific resolution upon the subject. But Dr. Hutton was informed that, notwithstanding the paper of instructions that was delivered to him concerning the duties of the office he had undertaken (and which was the same that had been delivered to his predecessors in the office many years ago,) consisted of five articles; yet it was not expected that he should fulfil any but the fourth article, which was to translate the foreign papers into English, the business mentioned in the three first articles, and in the fifth article, having, for a long time before, been done by one of the other Secretaries, who would still continue to execute it. So that Dr. Hutton, in accepting this office of *Foreign Secretary* to the Royal Society, was not required to intermeddle at all with the foreign correspondence of the Society (though *that* was the proper and original duty of the office,) but under the title of *Foreign Secretary* to the Society, became in truth the *Translator of their foreign papers*. And upon this footing he continued in the office from Jan. 14, 1779, to Feb. 7, 1782; that is, for more than three years; during all which time he translated all the foreign

reign papers of the Society (which were many in number, and some of them very long) into English, without any other reward than the above-mentioned very small salary of 20l. a year, arising from Mr. Keck's legacy.

As to the merit of these translations, those who have read them, and compared them with the originals, will form their own judgments of them: but to those who have not done so, I shall cite the authority of Dr. Fordyce in their favour, who declared in one of the debates of the Society in December last, 1783, that he had examined several of them, and had found them to be *uncommonly good*.

From the declarations made by the Council in January, 1779, of their own opinion, that the salary of this office was much too small, Dr. Hutton had always hoped that they would have made some addition to the profits of it, by paying him for the translations of the foreign papers, according to some rate that they might think reasonable, in proportion to their length and difficulty. But nothing of this kind was done during the three years that he was employed in these translations.

The subject, however, was at last resumed by the President and Council, in the month of February, 1782, when they came to a resolution, that the translations of the foreign papers should be paid for out of the stock of the Society, it being unreasonable to require them to be made any longer by the Foreign Secretary, for so small a reward as the salary of 20l. a year. But Dr. Hutton was not permitted to reap the benefit of this resolution. For, instead of continuing to employ him as the translator of them, as they had done during the foregoing three years, they resolved, that from thence forwards the business of translating the foreign papers should no longer be annexed to the office of the Foreign Secretary, but should be performed by such persons as the President, or the Secretary by his order, should appoint for that purpose; after first agreeing with them upon the price to be paid them for every translation, and a confirmation of such agreements by the Council. And they determined at the same time, that the Foreign Secretary should, for the future, be required only to do the proper and original business of his office according to Mr. Keck's will; namely, that of carrying on the foreign correspondence of the Society. The proceedings of the President and Council upon this subject were as follows:

At a meeting of the Council held on the 24th of January, 1782. It having been represented to the Council, that the foreign correspondence was not carried on with sufficient punctuality; and it being considered, that the emoluments of the Foreign Secretary are by no means adequate to the duties of his office, it was proposed by the President, "That for the future, the articles of his duty relating to the translating of papers, and the extracting
of

of foreign books, be dispensed with." The Council agreed to this proposal; and it was resolved, "That a Committee be appointed to define accurately the duties of the foreign Secretary, and to determine in what manner the translation of foreign papers should be procured for the future." The President, Governor Pownall, Dr. Blagdon, and the two Secretaries, (Mr. Planta and Mr. Maty) were named of this Committee.

At a subsequent meeting of the Council, held on the 7th of February, 1782, a report of the foregoing Committee appointed by the Council on the 24th of January, 1782, for defining the duty of the foreign Secretary, and for considering in what manner the translations of foreign papers should be procured for the future, was read as follows:

The Committee met the 31st of January, 1782; the President, Dr. Blagden, and Mr. Planta, being present. And, having consulted the entries in the minutes of Council concerning Mr. Keck's bequest for the appointment of a foreign Secretary, &c. they resolved to propose the following plan; to wit,

1st, That the foreign Secretary shall transmit to all foreigners, who may be elected into the Society, notice of their elections.

2dly, That he return thanks for books, and all other presents from foreigners, whenever such thanks are ordered by the Society; and that, for his information, the Clerk, under the inspection of the senior Secretary, enter in a book all the presents given to the Society; and that this book be laid before each Council, as a check for the regular performance of this duty.

3dly, That he answer all letters transmitted to the Society from foreigners, and also write such other letters to foreigners as the President and Council shall direct; and that he lay such answers and letters before the Council for their approbation; and that, on their being approved of, he enter them in a book to be provided for that purpose, and dispatch the originals.

4thly, That, on receiving papers in foreign languages, the President, or Secretary, by his order, shall agree for translations of them at the prices usually given; and that the names of the persons agreed with, and the prices, be reported to the Council for their approbation.

The Council agreed to the above report, and ordered, that it should be communicated to Dr. Hutton for his information.

At a third meeting of the Council on the 21st of March, 1782, Dr. Hutton attended, and the foregoing articles relating to the duty of foreign Secretary were read to him. He then desired to have some time allowed him to consider, whether the place would be acceptable to him upon the conditions therein specified, and also to have a copy of the said articles. And his request was granted.

And, lastly, at a fourth meeting of the Council on the 25th of April, 1782, Dr. Hutton attended, and signified, "That he accepted the office of Foreign Secretary, on the conditions proposed by the Council." He thought, however, that the conditions were rather hard; and had endeavoured, but in vain, to prevail on the Council to make them better.

From this time, therefore, April 25, 1782, we must consider Dr. Hutton as being Foreign Secretary, with an obligation to perform only the proper and original duty of the said office, as directed by Mr. Keck's will, to wit, *the duty of carrying on the Society's foreign correspondence*, and no longer as translator of the Society's foreign papers.

It appears from this account of the proceedings of the Council of the Royal Society, in the beginning of the year, 1782, concerning this office of Foreign Secretary, that it had been represented to the Council, some time before the 24th of January in that year, "that the foreign correspondence was not carried on with sufficient punctuality." This may be thought, at first sight, to imply a charge of negligence upon Dr. Hutton, who was then the Foreign Secretary. But it must be remembered, that, when Dr. Hutton was appointed to that office in January, 1779, he was informed by the Council, that, notwithstanding the three first articles of the duty of the Foreign Secretary, as stated in the paper then delivered to him related to the foreign correspondence, yet it was not expected that he should perform them, but only that he should perform the 4th article, which mentioned the translation of the foreign papers into English. And that this information was not given him hastily or by mistake, may be concluded from the subsequent behaviour of the President and Council towards him with respect to this matter. For none of them ever once spoke to him about the foreign correspondence, from January, 1779, to January, 1782, or gave him the least reason to imagine, that they expected that he should carry it on. Whatever negligencies therefore had happened upon that subject in those three years, (if any such did happen,) they have no relation to him; though afterwards, from the 25th of April, 1782, it became the chief article of his duty. We must therefore, on examining his conduct in this office of Foreign Secretary, attend to his manner of carrying on the foreign correspondence of the Society only, since the 25th of April, 1782.

Though, by the change made in the duties of the office of Foreign Secretary, by the resolution of the President and Council in February, 1782, the translation of foreign papers was no longer required from that officer, yet there was nothing in that resolution that excluded the Foreign Secretary from being chosen by the President and Council, from time to time, to translate some of those papers for the Society for the same rewards, or at the same

same prices, as any other persons. And, as Dr. Hutton had been employed in translating all those papers for three years together, for the inadequate reward of 20l. a year, and many of his translations had been very much approved of by persons of good judgment, (as we have seen above from the testimony of Dr. Fordyce,) it seemed reasonable that he should still be employed in translating some of those papers, as far as his time and other employments would allow him; his skill in the subjects discussed in them would enable him to do them properly, and that he should receive for so doing the sums of money which it had been lately resolved in Council to pay for such translations: And Dr. Hutton would have been glad to have been so employed. But none of this business has ever been put into his hands, and most probably because it was known that he would like it. For he has observed in the behaviour of the President towards him, for four or five years past, a degree of coldness and disgust, which has been continually increasing. Nor does he doubt but that the intention of the President in procuring the change in the duties of the office of Foreign Secretary, to be made in the manner in which it was made in February, 1782, (by taking the business of translating the foreign papers from that officer, and employing other persons, to be nominated by the Secretary with the consent of the President, to do it for sums of money to be agreed for with the President, instead of leaving it with the Foreign Secretary, and paying him the same sums of money for doing it,) was to make him disdain the office and resign it in disgust. But in this he did not succeed. For, as we have seen above, the Doctor, (though he had always flattered himself that the business of translating the foreign papers, or some of them, would have been left to him as Foreign Secretary, and that he should have been paid the sums which the Council should think proper to allow for making those translations,) did not think proper to resign the office at that time, but, after taking some time to consider whether he should keep it or not, declared, on the 25th of April, 1782, his resolution to remain in it on the new terms, notwithstanding his disappointment.

We must now, therefore, inquire how Dr. Hutton conducted himself in this office, after the 25th of April, 1782, when the duty of it was reduced to the management of the foreign correspondence of the Society, according to the original intention expressed in Mr. Keck's will.

Now the duties of the office since that time have been so very few and easy, that it was almost impossible for a man of Dr. Hutton's character for diligence to neglect them. They consisted, as we have seen, of three articles, namely, in the first place, To give notice to foreigners of their being elected Fellows of the Royal Society; and, secondly, To return thanks to
foreigners

foreigners for books and other presents received from them ; and, 3dly, To answer all letters sent by foreigners to the Society, and likewise to write such other letters to foreigners, as the President and Council shall direct. And of these articles, the second (which occurred the most frequently) was made extremely easy by a resolution of the Council of the Society, passed about ten years ago, " That in all the letters of thanks for foreign books, " no notice should be taken of their contents or their merits, " but that the Secretary should simply acknowledge the Society's " having received the book, and give their thanks for it to the " person from whom it was received." And, that this resolution might be the better observed, and the Society thereby avoid the inconveniences that might arise from their appearing to give any opinion concerning the books presented to them, they directed that these letters of thanks should be sent in printed copies of a certain form agreed on in the Council, with only the blanks that were left in them for the dates of the times of writing them, and the names of the books received, to be filled up by the Secretary who sent them.

The easy duties of this office, Dr. Hutton discharged regularly from April 25, 1782, to the 27th of November, 1783, when he resigned it to the Society for a reason that will presently be given. He regularly returned letters of thanks to all the foreigners who sent the Society presents, and he prepared answers to all the letters from foreigners to the Society, which were ever put into his hands by any other officer of the Society to be answered, and which indeed were but three ; and he did every other piece of business, that occurred in the office, with punctuality. And, to the end that he might have frequent opportunities of receiving directions from the President and the other Secretaries concerning the business they had for him to do, he used to come to town, at least, once every fortnight from Woolwich Academy (which is his usual place of residence,) to some chambers in Clement's-Inn, near Temple-bar, which he rented and kept for this very purpose ; and he used, each time of coming, to stay in London two or three days, and attend the weekly meeting of the Society at Somerset-place, where he was sure to find both the President and the two principal Secretaries.

With this attention to the duties of his office, he had no reason to apprehend, that any one should accuse him of neglecting it. Yet on the 20th of last November, 1783, something of this kind was attempted by Sir Joseph Banks, the President. He called a meeting of the Council of the Society on that day, and told them in a vague and general manner, " That Dr. Hutton was " negligent in his manner of discharging the duties of his office, " and that he thought they would do well to remove him from " it, and give it to another person, who would pay more atten-

" tion

"tion to it." Dr. Maskelyne, the Astronomer Royal, was at this time (as he had been constantly for many years before, and as he ought to be always,) a Member of the Council. He is a friend of Dr. Hutton, and well acquainted with his merit; and, amongst many other good qualities, has always much admired him for his diligence. He was therefore greatly surprized that the President should insinuate that he had been, in any degree, neglectful of the duties of his office, and said he could hardly conceive it. He therefore desired the President to mention some particular instances of the Doctor's neglect of his duty, that he might communicate them to the Doctor, and that the Doctor might be heard in his own defence, in which case Dr. Maskelyne said, he did not doubt but that Dr. Hutton would be able to explain and justify these instances of supposed negligence to the perfect satisfaction of the Council. Dr. Maskelyne was seconded in this proposal by the Reverend Mr. Maty, the Secretary of the Society. But the President rejected it, and would neither mention any particular instance of Dr. Hutton's neglect of his duty, nor suffer him to be called before the Council and heard in his own defence. But, as he found the Council did not seem disposed to concur with him in his proposal of immediately dismissing Dr. Hutton from his office, he made another which he thought was more likely to meet with their concurrence, and yet, he hoped, would ultimately produce the same effect. This second proposal was, that the Council should resolve, "That it would be for the benefit of the Society, that the business of the Foreign Secretary should be done by a person constantly residing in London."

This resolution was accordingly put to the ballot, and was carried in the affirmative with only two dissentient balls, which, it may be supposed, were those of Dr. Maskelyne and the Reverend Mr. Maty, the Secretary of the Society, who had, both of them, openly objected to the President's first proposal of dismissing Dr. Hutton from the said office of Foreign Secretary; for which opposition (it is worthy to be observed by the bye,) the President took upon him to express his displeasure to Mr. Maty. This resolution of the Council, was probably intended by most of the Members, (though two of them have since declared, that they did not mean it so,) to put Dr. Hutton under a necessity of resigning the said office of Foreign Secretary; and one of them said expressly in the Council-room, "That it would be letting Dr. Hutton down easy." And it did produce the effect intended; but not with so much silence and submission to the injustice of the measure, as the authors of it probably expected.

When Dr. Hutton was made acquainted with this resolution of the President and Council, he considered it as a prelude to a dismissal, it not being in his power to comply with the new condition

condition that seemed to be required from the person who should hereafter hold the office, namely, "that of residing constantly in London." He therefore, after conferring with a friend on the subject, determined to prevent the disgrace of a formal dismission from the office, by an immediate resignation of it. But, as he also conceived himself to have been very ill used by the President in this transaction, he resolved at the same time to make the resignation to the Society at large at one of their weekly meetings, instead of resigning it, in the usual way, to the President and Council, by whom he had been appointed to it. His intention in thus resigning it to the Society at large, was to make them acquainted with the ill treatment he had received, and to have an opportunity of justifying himself in their eyes from any suspicions of his having neglected the duties of his said office, which they might be induced to entertain, either in consequence of the measure itself, which had been adopted in the Council to his prejudice, or from the vague and general, but ill-founded, insinuations, which the President had thrown out against him. He accordingly made this resignation of the said office to the Society at large, on Thursday the 27th of last November, 1783, at Somerset-Place, in the following words addressed to the President :

" Mr. PRESIDENT,

" I have now had the honour to serve the Royal Society, in
 " the capacity of Foreign Secretary, for several years, having
 " been elected to that office in the beginning of your own Pre-
 " sidency. And I should still have no objection, but esteem it
 " an honour to serve the Society in any thing in which I can
 " ever be useful. But, understanding, Sir, that the circumstance
 " of my residence, for a great part of my time, at the distance
 " of *nine* miles from town, has occasioned, or has been ima-
 " gined to have occasioned, some difficulty or inconveniences.
 " I therefore beg leave to return thanks for all favours, and to
 " give notice, that I wish to resign that office."

The next Monday was the 1st of December, or the day after St. Andrew's day, November 30, (which fell this year on a Sunday,) and was the day on which the Society were to elect their new Council and their President, and other annual officers. On these occasions it has been customary for the President, to prepare a list of persons, whom he recommends to the Society, as fit to be chosen of the Council; and it has been almost as generally the practice of the Society, to chuse the Counsellors so recommended by the President. So that the President may truly be said to possess *in fact*, though *not of right*, the power of nominating

minating the Members of the Council. By virtue of this power, arising from the inattention of the Society to the exercise of their rights on this occasion, the President has caused Dr. Maskelyne, the Astronomer Royal, (but who presumed to oppose him in his attempt to dismiss Dr. Hutton from his office without a hearing) to be excluded from the Council of the present year, 1784. And it is said, there is a great dearth of skill in the astronomical sciences amongst the Members of the present Council. But we must hope that the Society will pay more attention to this matter on the 30th of next November!

After Dr. Hutton's resignation of the office of Foreign Secretary, in consequence of the above-mentioned resolution of the Council, and Dr. Maskelyne's exclusion from the Council, (which was, in all appearance, owing to his having opposed the proceedings of the President in the Council against Dr. Hutton,) many Gentlemen of the Society thought it was necessary to bring the President's violent and capricious conduct, in these and some other instances, before the Society at large; that the Society might either be induced to take such measures as would oblige him to act with more discretion and moderation for the future; or, if that could not be brought about, that they might become sensible of the necessity there would be, in that case, of chusing another President. Mr. Poore, of Lincoln's-Inn, a very learned and ingenious Barrister at Law, and a very respectable Member of the Royal Society, was one of the Gentlemen who entertained these sentiments. And, as Dr. Hutton, by resigning his office to the Society at large, had given them an opportunity of inquiring "why he had resigned it," and, "how he had done the duties of it while he held it," Mr. Poore took advantage of this circumstance to turn the attention of the Society to this subject, by moving on Thursday, the 11th of December, 1783, "To give Dr. Hutton thanks for the services he had done the Society in the said office of their Foreign Secretary during the time he had held it." He observed, that, as Dr. Hutton was a man of great eminence for learning and ability, and remarkable for an uncommon degree of diligence, he could not but suppose that he had discharged this office in a very proper manner while he had held it, and had thereby done considerable service and honour to the Society; for which he thought the Society ought to return him thanks. But his main object in making this proposal was, to bring the whole story of the resignation of the office, and the cause of it, into discussion before the Society, that they might be made acquainted with all the circumstances relating to them, and might, in consequence thereof, express a proper degree of indignation at them. Mr. Poore's motion was seconded by Mr. Maty, the Secretary; and both he and Mr. Poore, expressed their concern, that the Council should

should have thought fit to make a resolution, that seemed to have no other object in view, but to compel Dr. Hutton to resign his office of Foreign Secretary, (as he accordingly had since done,) and which therefore must be considered as equivalent to a dismissal of him from that office. They said, they thought that such a dismissal was a very harsh measure towards Dr. Hutton, as he had always done the duties of the office very diligently and punctually, both before and since the change made in them by the new regulation of the President and Council in February, 1782. And they observed, that one effect of this dismissal would probably be to make the Society suppose, that Dr. Hutton had been guilty of some very culpable neglects of the duties of his said office, that had induced the President and Council to treat him with such severity; though this, in truth, was very far from being the case, and the President, when desired by Dr. Maskelyne to mention some specifick instances of the negligence which he had imputed to him in vague and general terms, had declined doing so, and had refused to let Dr. Hutton be summoned before the Council, and heard in his own defence. This treatment, they said, they thought very injurious to a man of Dr. Hutton's respectable character and great merit with the Society; and they presumed the Society would be of the same opinion. And therefore they proposed, that the Society, in order to shew that they did not suppose him to have been negligent in discharging the duties of his said office, notwithstanding the treatment he had met with from the President and the late Council, should vote him their thanks for his services in the said office during the time he held it.

This proposal of returning thanks to Dr. Hutton, was not agreeable to the President; and he immediately objected to it upon the ground of the Society's being ignorant of Dr. Hutton's conduct in that office, and observed, that, if his conduct had been ever so punctual and meritorious in it, yet the Society at large did not *know* that it had been so, and therefore could not with propriety vote him their thanks on that account. And he declared, that he, who *did* know what Dr. Hutton's conduct had been in that office, was of opinion, that he had neglected the duties of it. He therefore proposed, that a Committee should be appointed to inquire into his conduct in the said office, before the Society proceeded to vote upon the proposed motion of thanks. This proposal of the President was certainly a very proper one, and I wish it had been adopted. And the friends of Dr. Hutton, who spoke in that debate, did not refuse, or decline it; though they expressed their surprize, that the President should not have specified some instances of the negligence he had imputed to Dr. Hutton, without which they thought a loose and general charge of negligence ought to be considered as no charge
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at all. But the President himself soon dropt all further mention of the proposal he had made of appointing a Committee of Inquiry; and his friends endeavoured to prevent its taking place, and to stifle all further discussion of the matter, by putting a previous question concerning Mr. Poore's motion for returning Dr. Hutton thanks; to wit, "Whether the said main question of returning thanks should be put to the vote, or not." This previous question was accordingly put, and ballotted for; and it was carried in the affirmative, namely, "That the main question of returning thanks should be put," by thirty-three balls to twenty-eight: after which the main question itself, "for returning thanks to Dr. Hutton," was likewise put and ballotted for, and was carried likewise in the affirmative, by thirty-balls against twenty-five. Upon which the President, somewhat against his inclination, returned Dr. Hutton thanks, in the name of the Society, for his good services in the said office of Foreign Secretary, during the time that he had held it. And so ended the debate at Somerset-Place, on Thursday, the 11th of December, 1783.

Though the President had declined mentioning *distinctly and intelligibly* to the Society, any particular instances of Dr. Hutton's neglect in the discharge of the duties of his said office of Foreign Secretary, yet he had thrown out something about *three letters that had remained unanswered*, but without saying from whom they had been received, or what they contained, or how long they had remained unanswered, or whether they required any answer; so that nobody could rightly understand what the charge meant. Dr. Hutton, however, was unwilling that any suspicion should remain on the mind of any Member of the Society, to the prejudice of his character, in consequence of this charge, loose and unintelligible as it was; and therefore he determined both to explain it and refute it. With this view he immediately drew up a written defence of his conduct, in which he explained the whole story of those three letters, and gave a clear and distinct account of the manner in which he had discharged all the duties of his late office, all the time he had held it, and more especially since the new regulation of the duties of it in February, 1782. Now it appears from this defence, that the three letters in question, were all the letters that were ever put into his hands, for him to write answers to, by any officer of the Society, during the whole time he had held the office; and they were given him by the Clerk of the Society, who said he had had them from the Secretary to deliver to him. Of these three letters, the first two were given him at the same time, being, as it were, but one letter; for they were both written by the same party at the same time, namely, by the President or Secretary of Harvard College, at Cambridge, near Boston, in New England. The first of them was only to return thanks to the Royal Society

for a present of Dr. Maskelyne's (the Astronomer Royal's) printed book of observations, and consequently seemed to require little or no answer, being itself an answer to the Society's present; and the other was, to announce to the Royal Society, a paper of astronomical observations, which were sent with it from that college to the Society. Now, as the first of these letters could require little or no answer, for the reason that has been just mentioned, Dr. Hutton delayed answering them both, till the paper of astronomical observations, that had been sent from New England, should have been communicated to the Society and read at their meeting, and afterwards have been either ordered by the Council, in their capacity of a Committee of Papers, to be printed in the Philosophical Transactions, or not to be printed; to the end that he might be able to inform the said College in New England, concerning the fate of their said paper of observations, namely, whether it was to be printed in the Transactions, or not. This delay Dr. Hutton knew was not likely to prove a long one; and he thought the foregoing reason for it would be allowed by every body to be a good one for making it; since it was natural to suppose, that the people of Harvard College would be glad to hear, whether their paper was to be published in the Philosophical Transactions, or not. And, that this delay might be as short as possible, Dr. Hutton often asked Dr. Maskelyne, (who was at that time a Member of the Council) whether or no, the said paper had passed the Council; and, as soon as he was told that it had passed it, and as he had provided the means of sending his answer to the College in New England, through the hands of a friend at New-York, (for, as we were then at war with the provinces of North America, it was not always practicable to find a channel of communication with New England;) he prepared his answer to the said two letters, and sent it (together with the two letters themselves, to which it was an answer,) by the Clerk of the Society, to be laid before the Council for their approbation. The Clerk accordingly delivered it to Mr. Planta, (the Secretary of the Society) for that purpose. But Mr. Planta did not lay it before the Council, but returned it to the Clerk to give it back to Dr. Hutton, saying, "That it did not signify then, as he himself had answered those two letters from New England already." The delay of this answer was but short; and the reason for it, here given, will, I presume, be generally allowed to be sufficient to account for and excuse it.

The third letter above-mentioned, which the President insinuated, that Dr. Hutton had neglected to answer, was likewise put into his hands by the Clerk of the Society, who said he had it from the Secretary to deliver to him. When the Clerk gave it him, Dr. Hutton asked him, "If he knew for what purpose
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“ that letter was delivered to him, as it was only a letter to announce a present made by a Mr. *Gual*, or some such name; to the Royal Society, and seemed therefore to require only a common letter of thanks for the present it accompanied, agreeably to the second article of the duty of the Foreign Secretary, as settled by the resolution of Council in February, 1782.” The Clerk answered. “ That he could not inform him for what purpose that letter was ordered to be delivered to him; for that he was only told to deliver it to him.” Dr. Hutton then asked Mr. Planta, the Secretary, about it, and he informed him, “ That it only required a common letter of thanks for the present that came with it:” which letter of thanks Dr. Hutton accordingly wrote without delay, and sent away to the giver of the present, in the same manner as all the other letters of thanks for presents made to the Society.

This letter, being *a mere letter of thanks in the common form*, was evidently not of a nature to be entered in the book, which, (according to the third article of the duty of the Foreign Secretary, as settled by the Council in February, 1782,) was to be provided for the purpose of entering *such answers and other letters to foreigners, as had been laid before the Council for their approbation, and had been approved of by them.*

From this account of these three letters, and Dr. Hutton’s conduct with respect to them, it is plain that his answers could not, and ought not to, have been entered in the aforesaid letter-book; and consequently that their not being found there, was no proof of Dr. Hutton’s neglect of his duty, as the President, or some of his friends, thought fit to insinuate, though they either knew, or ought to have known, the contrary.

These three letters were the only three letters that were ever put into Dr. Hutton’s hands by the other officers of the Society, to be answered by him, during the whole period from February, 1782, to the time of his resigning his office, November 27, 1783. His conduct therefore, with respect to writing answers to letters received from foreigners, was perfectly regular and irreproachable.

Soon after the debate at Somerset-Place, on Thursday, the 11th of December, 1783, in which Mr. Poore’s motion, “ for a vote of thanks to Dr. Hutton for his services in his late office,” had been carried, the President summoned a meeting of the Council for the Wednesday following, that is, for December 17, 1783. This Council accordingly met on that day, but without sufficient legal authority to do any act as a Council, because no summons had been sent to Mr. Brander, one of the Members of it; the charter of the Society expressly directing, that in all extraordinary Meetings of the Council, (such as this was) *every* Member of it shall be summoned; the words of the charter being

as follows, to wit, *Præmissâ semper in conventibus extra-ordinariis OMNIUM membrorum Concilii prædicti debitâ, seu legitimâ, summatione vel citatione.* See the quarto book of the Charters of the Society, published in 1776, page 34. The reason why no summons was sent to Mr. Brander, is said to have been, because he was out of town, and the President did not know where he lived in the country; though he had, a few days before, recommended him to the Society for a Member of the Council, and he had been chosen accordingly. It is, however, agreed, (whatever may have been the reason of it) that no summons to attend this Council was sent to him; and consequently the meeting of the Council was irregular, and all their acts invalid.

Dr. Hutton, hearing that the President had summoned this extraordinary Meeting of the new Council, laid before them the written defence of his conduct in his late office, which he had drawn up a few days before, in consequence of the President's insinuations on the proceeding on Thursday, December 11, that he had neglected the duties of it. He flattered himself, that the perusal of this defence, (the truth of which, he knew, could not be denied) would satisfy them, that those insinuations were perfectly groundless; and he then hoped, that they might be induced to rescind the resolutions passed on the 20th of November, 1783, in the last Council, requiring the Foreign Secretary to reside constantly in London; which had been evidently passed with a design to oblige him to resign his office, and which, in fact, had obliged him to resign it: and, when this resolution was thus rescinded, he further hoped that they would re-appoint him to the said office. Or, if he did not expect all these effects from the communication of his said defence, he thought at least, that *in justice they ought* to follow from it. But the Members of Council assembled at this meeting, did not answer these hopes and opinions. For they passed a resolution to confirm that of the former Council of the 20th of November, 1783, which had been the cause of his resigning his aforesaid office.

The substance of this written defence, so far as it relates to the three letters above-mentioned, to which the President had insinuated, that Dr. Hutton had neglected to write answers, has been already mentioned. But the defence itself, as delivered in on the 17th of December, 1783, to this meeting of Members of the Council, with respect to Dr. Hutton's conduct in the said office, since the new settlement of the duties of it in February, 1782, was as follows:

Dr. HUTTON's Defence of his Conduct in the Office of Foreign Secretary to the Royal Society, against some Insinuations thrown out concerning it by Sir JOSEPH BANKS, the President of the Society.

AS to the duties of the second agreement made in February, 1782, I have regularly fulfilled them all, as far as any occasion was ever offered, by returning thanks for all foreign presents received, and preparing answers to all the letters I ever received, and sending them to be laid before the Council, according to the 3d Article of the Agreement. And the reason why no answers are entered in a book, as they are required to be by that article, is as follows. In the first place then, I never received any more than three letters: I know of no others. And these were given to me by the Clerk, who said he had them from the Secretary to deliver to me. Now the first two of these three letters were given to me at the same time, being, as it were, but one letter, written at the same time by the same party. It was from the College at Cambridge in the American States, consisting of two parts; the one part was only to return thanks to the Royal Society for a present of the Astronomer Royal's printed book of Observations; and the other part was to announce a paper of Astronomical Observations sent at the same time from the College to the Society. Now, as the first of these two parts could require little, or no answer, I delayed answering them till the paper of Observations should pass the Society and Council, that I might be able to inform the College concerning the fate of it, whether it was to be printed, or not; and I asked Dr. Maskelyne from time to time, if it had passed the Council; which as soon as I knew of, and had provided the means of transmitting my answer to the College, through the hands of a friend at New-York, (for we were then at war with America) I prepared my answer, and sent it by the Clerk to be laid before the Council for their approbation, together with the original letter to which it was an answer. The Clerk accordingly delivered it for that purpose to Mr. Planta in Council; but Mr. Planta, without laying it before the Council, returned it to the Clerk to give it me back again, saying, "that it did not signify now, as he himself had answered it." So much then for the answer to the twin letter.—The only other letter that ever was delivered to me, was also through the Clerk, who said he had it from the Secretary to give to me. I asked the Clerk, "if he knew for what purpose it was delivered to me, as it was only a letter to announce a present (from a Mr. Gual, or some such name) sent to the Society, and seemed to require only a common letter of thanks, as in the 2d Article of the

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"Agreement:" but he said, "he knew not, as he was only told "to deliver it to me." I then asked Mr. Planta about it: and he informed me "that it only required a common letter of thanks "for the present which came with it." Which letter of thanks I accordingly wrote, and sent, in like manner as all the rest, and which therefore was not a letter to be entered in a book, according to the 3d Article of the Agreement. Hence then it appears, that no answers to these letters can have been entered in a book, agreeably to the said 3d Article; since only one of them, namely, the twin letter, required an answer that ought to have been therein entered; and the answer I had prepared to that letter, and had delivered in, through the Clerk, to Mr. Planta, the Secretary, to be laid before the Council, was never laid before them.

But, if even something of this kind had been the case;—if I had been dilatory in some part, or if I had delayed, or neglected some answers to letters;—might I not have expected to have been reminded of it by the President, or by some person for him, to have quickened my application, or to have given me occasion to clear up the matter, that there might be no misunderstanding, before a vote of censure should be past on me, amounting to a discharge from my office, unheard, and without the knowledge of any suspicion of any neglect, or offence given?—And for this purpose the President had opportunities enow given him to speak to me about that, or any other business, as I purposely have constantly attended, at least, every other public meeting of the Society, and very often every meeting, to the great neglect of my many other literary pursuits. And these frequent attendances in London, (where I have commonly remained for three days each time I came,) have obliged me to keep apartments in town, the expences of which have always amounted to more than double the salary I received for the discharge of the office. But, notwithstanding all these opportunities, yet, since the last agreement in February, 1782, the President has never once opened his mouth to me on the subject of my office, nor ever sent me any message concerning it whatever.

Dec. 16, 1783.

From the foregoing defence of Dr. Hutton's conduct three conclusions seem clearly to follow; to wit, 1st, That he discharged the duties of it very diligently and punctually; which, indeed, since the last settlement of them in February, 1782, have been very easy, and such as almost any man, of much less diligence than Dr. Hutton, might discharge, and, probably, would discharge with punctuality. And, 2dly, That his residence out of town at Woolwich Academy was not the smallest impediment to his discharging them properly; and, consequently, that the resolution of Council proposed by the President, and passed on the

20th of Nov. 1783, concerning the benefit which the Society would receive from the Foreign Secretary's residing constantly in London, was made unnecessarily, and without any just foundation, and was calculated merely to deprive Dr. Hutton of his office: and, 3dly, That the President, from some other motive than a desire of having the business of the office of Foreign Secretary discharged with punctuality, was desirous of getting Dr. Hutton removed from the said office. For otherwise he would have taken some opportunity in the course of the regular attendances of Dr. Hutton once a fortnight, or oftener, at the meetings of the Society, to have mentioned to him the delays he had observed him to make, (if he had made any) in answering foreign letters, or in discharging the other duties of his office, and to desire he would be more diligent and punctual for the future; and not have continued all the while in a state of hostile and insidious silence upon this subject, as if he was watching for an opportunity of catching him in some fault, or neglect of the duties of his office, in order to procure his dismissal from it. It appears, however, that the Doctor's habitual diligence in discharging all these duties disappointed these expectations of the President, and afforded him no such opportunity.

It will, doubtless, appear strange to many of my readers, that after the foregoing Defence of Dr. Hutton's conduct had been laid, on the 17th of December, 1783, before the new Council of the Society, they should, nevertheless, have thought fit to approve and confirm the resolution of the former Council, passed on the 20th of November, 1783, concerning the residence of the Foreign Secretary in London, which occasioned Dr. Hutton's resignation. But it must be recollected, that eleven of the twenty-one members of this new Council had been members of the former one, and that the other ten had been chosen members of it merely in consequence of the President's recommendation, according to the customary, confidential, shall I call it? or negligent and supine, practice of the Society in their annual elections; and therefore might feel themselves under a sort of obligation, or a strong inclination at least, from gratitude to the author of their distinction, to comply with his wishes.

But, though the new Council shewed this disregard for Dr. Hutton's Defence, he hoped it would meet with a better fate from the candour of the Society at large, to whom he resolved to have it presented. Accordingly at the meeting of the Society at Somerset-Place, on Thursday evening the 18th of December, 1783, Dr. Horsley informed the Society, that Dr. Hutton had been uneasy at some vague charges, or rather insinuations, that had been thrown out against him by the President, at the preceding meeting of the Society, with respect to his conduct in his late office of Foreign Secretary, and particularly about three
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letters which he had neglected to answer ;—and that, as he wished to clear himself in the opinion of the fellows of the Royal Society from this undeserved imputation, he had drawn up a defence of his conduct in the said office in writing, which, he trusted, would prove fully satisfactory to the Society, though it had not had the good fortune to make any great impression on the Council, to whom it had been already presented, but who, notwithstanding, had passed a vote of approbation and confirmation of the resolution of the former Council on the 20th of November, 1783, concerning the Foreign Secretary's residence in London, which had been the cause of Dr. Hutton's resignation. Dr. Horsley therefore moved, that the said written defence of Dr. Hutton's conduct should be immediately read to the Society by one of their Secretaries : and Dr. Maskelyne (who had accidentally been absent at the former meeting, when the vote of thanks had been carried for Dr. Hutton) came forward with great spirit, and seconded it, and at the same time informed the Society, that in the former Council, (of which he had been a member) he had moved to have Dr. Hutton heard in his own defence against the general charges of negligence in his office, which the President had thrown out against him, before he was dismissed ; but had been refused. He therefore hoped that the Society would not now refuse Dr. Hutton this opportunity of vindicating his conduct before them, by communicating to them his written defence. This motion being not much objected to, the above-recited written defence of Dr. Hutton's conduct was read to the Society by Mr. Maty, the Secretary. And then, as nobody denied the truth of the facts stated in the said defence, or alledged any other objection to Dr. Hutton's conduct in the said office of Foreign Secretary, Governor Pownall moved the following resolution, to wit, " That, if any imputations of neglect of his duty in the office " of Secretary to the Royal Society for their foreign correspon- " dence, have been cast by any person on Dr. Hutton, it is the " sense of the Society that those imputations are entirely effaced, " and Dr. Hutton's conduct in that office perfectly cleared, and " shewn to be free from blame, by his written defence, and by " what has been testified in the course of the debate concerning " it." This resolution was put hypothetically, or with an *if*, because the President seemed sometimes to say that he had not thrown any imputation on Dr. Hutton's conduct, though in the former debate he had expressly declared that he thought his conduct censurable, and had proposed at first, (though he afterwards dropped the proposal) that the Society should appoint a Committee to inquire into his conduct in the said office.

This question was seconded by Mr. Glenie, and, after some little debating, was put to the ballot, and carried in Dr. Hutton's favour

favour by forty-nine balls to fifteen. And so the business of the evening of the 18th of December, 1783, concluded.

The only objection that the President had hitherto thrown out against Dr. Hutton's conduct in his late office of Foreign Secretary, was the supposed neglect of answering the three letters above-mentioned; which objection we have seen to have been fully refuted by Dr. Hutton's written defence. The President, therefore, in a meeting of about fifty fellows of the Royal Society, whom he considered as most in his interest, and whom he assembled at his house in Soho-square on (I think) the first day of January, 1784, thought fit to strengthen his accusation of Dr. Hutton by the mention of another charge. He said that Mr. *Bonnet*, of Geneva, a very eminent writer on metaphysical subjects, and likewise on Natural History, had some time ago made the Royal Society a present of a compleat set of all his works, and had expected a polite and respectful acknowledgement on that account from the Society; but that he had complained to his friends in England, in some letters they had lately received from him, that, instead of such a polite and respectful acknowledgement, he had received from Dr. Hutton a short letter of thanks, in a very dry style, that had quite surprized and disappointed him: from which the President wished his audience to conclude, that Dr. Hutton was not a fit person to be Foreign Secretary to the Society, and to carry on a correspondence with polite and learned foreigners. This was the President's new charge against Dr. Hutton; and the fact stated in it is true. Dr. Hutton did write Mr. Bonnet only a short and dry letter of thanks for his present, as the President stated; and Mr. Bonnet may have complained of it. But in writing such a short and dry letter, he obeyed the order of the Council of the Society made about ten years ago, (and which has been already mentioned) by which it was resolved, that all letters written in acknowledgement of the receipt of books presented to the Society, should be written according to a certain printed form, and should contain nothing more than the name of the book, and the time when it was received, with the thanks of the Society for the present. And this order of the Council, (in obedience to which Dr. Hutton acted) either *was* known, or *ought to have been* known, to the President. And, if it *was* known to him, what must impartial people think of the President's conduct, in thus bringing a charge of negligence against Dr. Hutton for having acted in conformity to an express, and a very modern, order of the Council?

This answer to the President's new objection about the dry letter to Mr. Bonnet, was given publicly before the Society at large by Dr. Horsley, at the weekly meeting of the Society on Thursday, the 8th of January, 1784.

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When Dr. Hutton's conduct in the office of Foreign Secretary to the Royal Society had thus been compleatly and publickly vindicated from the charges thrown out against it, his friends thought it a piece of justice due to him, to endeavour to procure his restoration to the said office. They therefore resolved to bring on before the Society at large, (who had expressed their approbation of Dr. Hutton's conduct in the said office, by the vote which they had passed in his favour on the 18th of December, 1783, by 49 balls against 15) a motion for recommending it to the President and Council to rescind the resolution that had been made by the late Council on the 20th of last November, about the residence of the Foreign Secretary in London, (which had produced, and probably been intended to produce, Dr. Hutton's resignation of the office) and to restore Dr. Hutton to the said office. This motion was accordingly made by Mr. Baron Maseres, on the 12th day of February, 1784, and was seconded by Dr. Horsley, and supported in debate by several other gentlemen, and at last put to the ballot; when there were found to be 47 balls in favour of it, but 85 balls against it, there being present at the Society on that occasion 58 members more than had been present at the former meeting on the 18th of December, when the question of approbation of Dr. Hutton's conduct had been carried by 49 balls against 15. And it was observed, that most of this additional number of fellows of the Society, who came to support the *President* (as it was called) on this occasion, were such persons as very seldom thought fit to honour the Society's meetings with their presence.

In the course of this debate Mr. Anguish, the Accountant-General of the Court of Chancery, and who is likewise one of the Commissioners of the Publick Accounts, seemed uncommonly anxious to support and justify the President's conduct in this business, and for that purpose to find out some neglect in Dr. Hutton's manner of discharging the duties of his late office, which might give a colour of justice to the late harsh treatment of him. And with this view he mentioned to the Society fifteen letters of thanks for presents made to the Society, which Dr. Hutton, he said, had written all at once to the several persons from whom the presents had been received, instead of writing them at different times, immediately after the receipt of the several presents respectively. Now as to these letters of thanks, Dr. Hutton says that he believes it may be true that they were answered all at once. But no blame belongs to him on this account. For the manner of doing this business was for him to look, from time to time, into a certain book in which the Clerk of the Society enters the minutes of the presents received from abroad, and from thence to extract the titles of the donors, and their places of abode, and the proper manner of directing letters to them, and then to send them

them the letters of thanks. And Dr. Hutton did accordingly examine this minute-book from time to time, and did immediately make and send away letters of thanks to the donors for all the presents he had found to be therein entered, whether many or few : so that, if there were fifteen letters sent away all at the same time, it was because he found the presents that occasioned them all entered in the said book at the same time. And thus it appears that Dr. Hutton is innocent of this fifth and last charge, (which Mr. Anguish laboured so much to enforce against him,) as well as of all the preceeding ones.

This being the case, it remains only to explain (if possible,) to my readers, how it should come to pass, that the President of the Society should have taken such a strange pique against a man of Dr. Hutton's distinguished merit and character, and who had always punctually discharged the duties of his office. Dr. Hutton knows only of two things in his conduct, (and both perfectly innocent, and in the opinion of most people, I believe, meritorious,) that can have given rise to this dislike. The first is, "his having been honoured with the esteem and friendship of our late worthy President, Sir John Pringle, which he obtained at first by means of the excellent paper he wrote concerning his experiments on the force of fired gunpowder, and which he ever after took care to maintain, and cultivate, to the end of Sir John Pringle's life;" and the second is, "his having neglected to attend the President at the public breakfasts he gives to several Members of the Royal Society, at his house in Soho-Square." This neglect he supposes to be the foundation of a complaint that has been made by the President, "of his having been deficient in personal respect towards him," as he is not conscious of any other failure that could bear that construction. But this attendance at the President's public breakfasts, Dr. Hutton cannot consider as a duty of the office of Foreign Secretary; though he acknowledges, that it is fit he should often be at hand to receive the directions of the President and Council, concerning the business of it, and he accordingly used regularly to come to town for that very purpose, and attend the weekly meetings of the Society, at least, once a fortnight, and upon those occasions to stay three or four days in town, during which time he was always ready either to receive the directions of the President and Council, at the Society's apartments at Somerset-Place, or to attend the President at his own house, whenever he should please to send for him. But we have seen above, in Dr. Hutton's defence, page 21, that, notwithstanding all these opportunities, yet since the last settlement of the duties of the office, in February, 1782, the President has never opened his mouth to Dr. Hutton on the subject of his office, nor ever sent him any message concerning it whatever.

If there is any other cause, besides the two above-mentioned, for the President's strange dislike of Dr. Hutton (whom he ought rather to cherish and be proud of, as an ornament to the Society he presides over,) it is the uprightness and impartiality of Dr. Hutton, in discharging his duty as a Member of the Council during the first two years of Sir Joseph Banks's Presidency, or in the years 1779 and 1780. For he was then a Member of the Council, and used to deliver his opinion upon the subjects which came before the Council for their determination, (as, for example, upon the merits of papers that had been read before the Royal Society, and the expedience of printing them in the Philosophical Transactions,) with freedom and firmness, (though always with decency and good manners,) instead of echoing and confirming the opinion thrown out by the President, which the President it seemed always expected and thought his due. These instances of freedom of spirit, (though absolutely necessary to the faithful discharge of his duty as an honest Counsellor,) the President considered as so many acts of rebellion, or *crimina læsæ majestatis*, and, in consequence of the Doctor's perseverance in the commission of them, resolved to get rid of him as a Counsellor, and accordingly procured him to be left out of the Councils for the years 1781, 1782, 1783, and the year 1784, as he has lately caused Dr. Maskelyne, the Astronomer Royal, to be also left out of the present Council for the year 1784, for a similar offence; namely, for having opposed the dismissal of Dr. Hutton from his late office of Foreign Secretary of the Society, without a charge and without a hearing. And it is possible, that the President's indignation against Dr. Hutton on this account, may not have been satisfied with his removal from the Council (of which he was so able and honest a Member,) but may have co-operated with the two former grounds of the President's disgust against him, in producing his late capricious and unjust removal from the office of Foreign Secretary.

These are the best conjectures I can form, (from conversing with Dr. Hutton, and other Gentlemen, upon the subject,) concerning the motives of the President's dislike to Dr. Hutton. They are, however, but conjectures; and every reader will judge for himself of the degree of their probability. But, as to the facts that have been above related, I believe them to be indisputably and exactly true.

Having thus set forth, at, I am sensible, a tedious length, the whole history of this dismissal of Dr. Hutton (for so it must be called) from his late office of Foreign Secretary to the Society, I will now beg leave to recapitulate the principal parts of it, in as few words as possible, that the reader may see the whole in one short and general view.

It appears then, that the office of Foreign Secretary to the Royal Society, is an office created by the will of a Mr. Robert Keck, who died in the year 1727, and left 20l. a year to be given to some Fellow of the Royal Society, as a reward for carrying on the correspondence of the Society with learned foreigners; and that the person who should carry on this correspondence, was to be a Member of, and appointed by, the Society.

It appears, 2dly, That, notwithstanding *the whole Society* have, according to Mr. Keck's will, the right of appointing this Foreign Secretary; they have, nevertheless, always permitted this right to be exercised by the President and Council only.

It appears, 3dly, That, though the original and proper duty of the Foreign Secretary, according to the words of Mr. Keck's will, was to carry on the correspondence of the Society with foreigners, the President and Council have, at some times, super-added to this duty, the much more laborious business, of translating into English all the papers presented to the Society that were written in any other language, those written in Latin not excepted.

And, 4thly, That this last duty was required of the Foreign Secretary in December 1778, and January, 1779, when the office was bestowed by the President and Council on Dr. Hutton; and that from that time to February, 1782, this was the only duty done by, or required from, Dr. Hutton in the said office of Foreign Secretary; the original duty of carrying on the foreign correspondence being done by the other Secretaries.

And, 5thly, It appears that in January, 1779, when this office was bestowed on Dr. Hutton, it was the declared opinion of the President and Council, that the salary of 20l. a year, was much too small a reward for the labour of translating all the foreign papers into English, which was then the duty of the Foreign Secretary.

And, 6thly, That, notwithstanding this declared opinion of the President and Council, Dr. Hutton never received any other reward for his labour in discharging this duty of translating the foreign papers, but the said salary of 20l. a year, during the three years that he performed this duty, or from January, 1779, to February, 1782.

And, 7thly, It appears that in February, 1782, the duties of the office of Foreign Secretary were taken into consideration by the President and Council, and settled anew; and it was then determined by them, that the business of translating the foreign papers should no longer belong to the said office, but that the said translations should be made by such persons as the principal Secretaries of the Society, under the direction of the President, should agree with for that purpose, at certain prices to be paid to the said persons for their labour, out of the stock of the Society,

ciety, which should be agreed on between them and the President; and that from that time forwards, the duty of the Foreign Secretary should be the same as it had been originally, according to Mr. Keck's will, namely, to carry on the correspondence of the Society with foreigners.

And, 8thly, That Dr. Hutton consented to continue in the office upon these terms, though not without some dissatisfaction, at not being continued in the business of translating the foreign papers, and receiving those rewards for his trouble, which the President and Council now resolved to allow for those translations.

And, 9thly, That, from February, 1782, to November, 1783, when he resigned it, he did the duty of the office, according to the new settlement of it, (which duty was, indeed, very slight and easy,) diligently and punctually, and never received the least intimation from the President, or any one Member of the Council, that the business of it was thought to be delayed, or in any degree neglected.

And, 10thly, It appears that, notwithstanding Dr. Hutton's diligence in discharging the duties of the said office, Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Society, proposed to the Council, in a meeting held on the 20th of November, 1783, to remove Dr. Hutton from his said office of Foreign Secretary, alledging, in general terms, that he had neglected the duties of it; but without specifying any instances of such neglect, though requested to do so by Dr. Maskelyne, who was then a Member of the Council: and that, when Dr. Maskelyne further desired that Dr. Hutton might be sent for to appear before the Council, and be heard in his own defence against any charges of neglect of his duty which might be brought against him, the President refused to do so, and still expressed a wish that he should be removed from his office immediately:—And that, when he found the Council unwilling to concur with him in removing Dr. Hutton from his said office immediately in *a direct manner*, he proposed to them the resolution concerning the expedience of the Foreign Secretary's residing in London, which was calculated to produce Dr. Hutton's removal from it in *an indirect manner*, to wit, by obliging him to resign it; and that to this resolution he obtained the concurrence of his Council.

And, 11thly, That, in consequence of this resolution of the Council, Dr. Hutton did soon after, to wit, on the 27th day of November, 1783, resign his said office of Foreign Secretary, as the President had foreseen, and intended he should do; but that, as Dr. Hutton conceived himself to have been injured by the President and Council, in being thus driven to the necessity of resigning his said office, he made the resignation publicly to the Society at large, at one of their weekly meetings at Somerset-Place,

Place, in order to make them acquainted with the cause, or occasion, of his resigning it, and the steps that had been taken to oblige him to it, and to obtain, if possible, their interference with the President and Council, in the way of recommendation, for his restoration to it, or, at least, to excite their attention to the arbitrary and unjust manner in which their President takes upon him to procure the dismissal of their other servants, and the too great easiness and complaisance with which the Members of the Council seem inclined to gratify his caprices.

To conclude,—When the attention of the Society shall be thoroughly excited upon this subject, and they shall resolve to chuse into their Council men of eminent learning in the different branches of science which the Society professes to cultivate, and of independent characters, and known zeal for the welfare and honour of the Society, and whose employments and situations in life permit them, and inclinations lead them, to attend its meetings regularly;—I say, when the Society shall resolve to chuse such men into their Council, instead of blindly adopting the List of Counsellors recommended to them by the President, the complaints of the mismanagement of the business of the Society will, probably, soon cease, and the ancient harmony of its Members, and the peace and tranquillity of its weekly meetings, as well as its general reputation at home and abroad, (which, no doubt, have suffered by the late dissensions,) will be restored.

F I N I S,

